

STERLING A. BROWN

We sincerely appreciate Charles Rowell's asking us to write this introductory note to *Callaloo's* special section on Sterling Brown. Several recent studies, symposia, and awards are testaments to a revival of critical interest in Sterling Brown, poet, literary critic, teacher, anthologist, and raconteur. *The Collected Poems of Sterling A. Brown* (Harper & Row), for example, received the Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize for 1980 from *Saturday Review*. The Modern Language Association, at its December 1981 meeting, paid tribute to Brown's many years of distinguished service as a man of letters. *Black World* (September 1970) and Michael Harper and Robert Stepto's *Chant of Saints: A Gathering of Afro-American Literature, Art, and Scholarship* (1979) are only two of the many anthologies, critical studies, and special issues of journals dedicated to him, for his consistent questioning of Black images in American literature and for his pioneering cultural studies. At Brown University, 30 April and 1 May 1981, a symposium assessed the extent to which Brown's thinking reflected and influenced Afro-American and American views on culture and literature. Brown's sensitive creative writing and astute critical judgment are captured in his four published collections of poetry, six critical studies and anthologies, and his over forty essays, critical articles, and speeches in journals, magazines, and books, including his regular book review column in the early issues of *Opportunity: A Journal of Negro Life*. Here, we think, is more testimony that Sterling Brown is a presence who remains, in the words from one of his favorite poems, "steady and unaccusing."

—John Edgar Tidwell and John S. Wright